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The Secretary  
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## SWITCHING SUPPLIERS - THE CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

I have been trying to change my supplier from you to one which is a co-operative.

I have grown a moral objection to the nature and direction of your company and nearly every other energy supplier. You are perceived to be run by greedy executives who wish to line their own pockets and those of shareholders. You are not run for the benefit of either your customers nor (I'm guessing but probably right) your staff. As an ex-bank manager I won't trust you with a direct debit; you think you have the right to change them at will and levy exorbitant "fines" for prompt payment which isn't prompt enough, printed bills, payment by cheque, or anything else which you may have to do which is more than nothing. You give lower tariffs to people who use more energy: their tariffs should be **higher** or the same. You have **too many** tariffs, too many schemes and now you want us to adopt the Argos lifestyle you have chosen for us. You claim to be "Best for Customer Service" which is a bit like claiming to be the best cow pat in a field. You have bought into smart metering: then please call it that, not iplan. It's not an Apple product, please don't be a iponce and iconfuse us. You have other gimmicks aplenty don't you? What with a £10 bribe to accept paperless billing which I would not do unless you guarantee to always send ONE BILL as a pdf file by email. I do not wish to have to visit your web site ever: it takes too long and will probably waste more of my time by needing the latest version of something, a password for this, and a passcode for that. Meh. And don't get me started on how your pricing doesn't follow the market down (so you can 'rob' us with inflated margins) nor take account of the 'futures' you should be investing in.

I want an energy supplier who is pleasant and fair to deal with and who focuses on supplying energy at the lowest possible price on one bill **and nothing else**.

But this switching process is taking far too long: you have taken far too long. Why is it that the final Gas and Electricity bills can't be produced on the same day the readings are taken? I have your people badgering me on my mobile phone because the gas bill was produced on the 27 February but the electricity bill was not produced until 9 March. Only then did you submit them using an extremely slow (the cheapest) despatch method. You have unrealistic expectations of both your delivery system and the frequency at which your customers sit at their desks (once or twice a month) to deal with household bills. You are not the boss of me. You are supposed to be a Dual Fuel supplier. I expect ONE Bill and to pay it within a month. That is customary, normal business practice: one supplier, one bill, one month. Your expectations of an immediate response are always laughable, unreasonable and based on an over-inflated perception of your importance to me. I have a life. Apparently, you can take as much time as you like to do what's expected of you: why can't I? Your arrogance astounds me though it doesn't surprise me: it is an industry disease (though the infected are usually in denial).

May I say that I am utterly disgusted at your recent feeble attempts at customer service too. I telephoned the 0800 number demanded of me in a rude text message and spoke to a clerk who answered "Southern Electric". Well, that wasn't a good start. I tried to explain the situation, including your late electricity bill, but all she would do is obsess about data protection and wanted to know my mother's maiden name or something. What? Do you think someone is going to pretend to be me and phone up and say what I said? Are you completely **insane**? Do you train your staff or employ robots who can only follow some terrible CMS script? You obviously don't know the first thing about Data Protection so please stop your staff drawing that like a weapon. I just want to make quick calls, not have my time wasted.

*Do you do that with your staff too? Is the reason (not) to do something minor often blamed on Health and Safety or similar? I'll bet it is.*

I have wasted a lot of my time waiting and dealing with what is meant to be a painless, quick process of switching. Instead, you have to turn it into a drama of delay, stupidity and nuisance, bordering on harassment. Consequently, and as I explained to your operative, I am imposing a fine on you for incompetence which amounts to 5% of the final bills. A penalty is something you will understand and will hopefully help focus your mind on *real* customer service improvement and timely switching.

Please be advised that if you do contact me again there will be a £50 handling charge for each contact made by you. Contacting me again after 14 days from today will be deemed your acceptance of these terms.

I enclose a cheque for £282.38 in full and final payment and don't expect to hear from you ever again.

T.J.R. Hill

enc. payment slips (2), cheque.